Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Vehicle thefts in the area are most likely committed at night as crimes of opportunity, authorities say.

String of thefts leaves Warrenton residents on edge

By JACK HEFFERNAN The Daily Astorian

en Redburn dropped by to visit a friend at a Birch Avenue home in Warrenton a few weeks ago. Leaving his car door unlocked, he knocked on the front door about 7 p.m., well after sunset.

"I popped in to see how my friend was doing," Redburn said. "I didn't even plan to go in.'

But Redburn's friend invited him inside. When the visit ended around 7:45 p.m., he returned to his car to find his visor down, items scattered about and the glove box open. The thief stole two pocket knives to boot.

Redburn's case was one of about 100 reported to Warrenton police this fall. In what appears to have been a coordinated effort to steal items from cars, the recent spree began a few weeks into October and peaked in the middle of November. The theft wave crashed a few weeks ago after an arrest, and police are working toward potential charges.

Warrenton Police Chief Mathew Workman, who has led the department since 2008, said he's seen theft outbreaks that are similar in nature, but not in scale.

"I think this one, by comparison, is a little bit larger," Workman said. "We're not even sure we have the full scope of the number of cars and number of people affected."

Scope

Adding to the uncertainty, not every unlawful entry case has been reported. People often alert police only when items of a certain value have been stolen, Workman said.

The department heard anecdotally about other cases where items of lesser value were stolen or a car had obviously been unlawfully entered, but residents did not respond when contacted by police.



This image captured by a security camera shows someone leaving the scene after attempting to open the door of a vehicle they were not authorized to enter.

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Mathew Workman | Warrenton police chief

Warrenton police upped patrols in November to address the break-ins, which typically took place at night or in the early morning inside unlocked cars.

An officer spotted someone rummaging through a car early in the morning Nov. 7 near Warrenton City Park. After chasing the suspect on foot and establishing a perimeter for nearly an hour, police lost sight of the person.

Less than a week later, Tony Murray received a call from his wife, Shelly. As she was driving to work, Shelly noticed that the glove box in her car had been opened and an expensive flashlight was

He reviewed security footage from the eight cameras attached to their home on Cedar Avenue. The couple bought the cameras after someone entered Shelly's car five years ago.

The video showed a man in a light-colored sweatshirt with his hood up approach the driveway. He tried to open the door of Murray's son's truck before making his way to Shelly's car, which was unlocked. As he paced away from the scene 30 seconds later, the man tried to open the door of another car parked on the street before disappearing

Murray called police later in the day and found out they already had a potential suspect in custody. He had been arrested on parole violation warrants, though he denies connection to the thefts and charges have not been filed. Police are searching for more evidence and pursuing leads to others who may have been involved.

See THEFT WAVE, Page 7A

Warrenton will boost career tech

Grant will be coupled with Measure 98 money

> By EDWARD STRATTON The Daily Astorian

The Warrenton-Hammond School District has received \$436,286 in state grants to kick-start the construction of a center at Warrenton High School offering students automotive, welding and other technology programs.

The Bureau of Labor and Industries and state Department of Education awarded \$10.3 million in career and technical Education revitalization grants to 101 middle and high schools statewide. Warrenton was tied for the highest award, along with a proposal for new career-technical pathways helping underrepresented minorities in Madras and Warm Springs.

Josh Jannusch has been with the school district 15 years as a science and technology teacher and recently became a vice principal at Warrenton High School. He applied for the state grant to build what he calls the Warrenton Technology Center as an on-campus home for automotive and welding programs, along with technology courses he has helped develop over the past several years.

"Obviously, our space has been our No. 1 issue, facilities-wise, just being able to find the space to offer these kinds of classes," Jannusch said.

The school district lacks career-technical educational options beyond sending students several miles to Clatsop Community College's Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station campus east of Astoria, a tough fit with class schedules. The district also participates in a health occupations class at Columbia Memorial Hospital and nursing assistant courses at the college.

See GRANT, Page 7A

Tongue Point throws one last headache toward Port

Fishing boat abandoned several years ago

> By EDWARD STRATTON The Daily Astorian

Before the Port of Astoria can get out of North Tongue Point, the agency will have to pay more than \$20,000 to clean and demolish an abandoned fishing boat left behind.

One of the Port's last pieces of property at North Tongue Point is the run-down 74-foot wooden fishing boat Recruit. The boat has languished the past several years on a collection of wooden blocks supported by boat stands outside on the tarmac.

See PORT, Page 7A

Marijuana retailers get green light in Cannon Beach

Attorney finds no conflicts with comprehensive plan

By BRENNA VISSER The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH - After months of controversy, Cannon Beach found there are no conflicts between the comprehensive plan and retail marijuana shops.

The city's land use attorney, Bill Kabeiseman, gave a report to the City Council Tuesday that asserts having marijuana shops downtown is fully consistent with the plan, which acts as the

city's constitution for development. A discussion about the comprehen-

sive plan and how it relates to marijuana retailers was prompted by David Frei, the acting spokesman of the Ecola Square Homeowners Association, who for months has objected to the marijuana retailer Five Zero Trees moving in across the street at 140 S. Hemlock.

At previous City Council meetings, Frei has argued allowing Five Zero Trees so close to a residential area would be detrimental to "the unique character of downtown" and out of step with the plan's goal to provide its residents "the quality of life that they desire." He also claimed the crime he believes is associated with marijuana retailers would be in conflict with plan's goal to preserve "a sense of safety."



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

See MARIJUANA, Page 7A Chris Hess works at the Five Zero Trees store in Cannon Beach in October.

